

Warwick Community Outreach Educational Committee
Minutes for September 20, 2016

Members Present: Karen Bachus (co-chair), Sarah Callahan, Nathan Cornell (co-chair), Ed Ladouceur, June Marchant, Darlene Netcoh (clerk), Michael Pierce, Anthony Sinapi

- I. Call to Order:** Nathan Cornell officially called the meeting to order at 6:13 pm.
- II. Vote to Approve Minutes:** The committee voted to approve the minutes of July 13, 2016.
- III. Discussion: Review of Topics Discussed at Previous Meeting.** The committee reviewed the issues, particularly consolidation and special education.
- IV. Discussion: Consolidation Update**
 - A.** Michael Pierce gave a detailed description of all of the problems at the new Vets Junior High. The building was not ready for an entirely new population of students, teachers, and administrators. The central administration has denied that the building was not ready. There are holes in the walls, classrooms without materials, and a heating system that still hasn't been repaired. Pierce said that he could "likely sit here and take all night" to describe the issues at Vets. He said what most people don't know is the scheduling of special education has been a disaster. He said that there are many special education violations because the scheduling is not following students' IEPs. He said that students who have been in self-contained classrooms are now in regular classrooms. A "higher up" said that this scheduling is legal. Pierce said that the only bright spot at Vets is that there are experienced teaching and maintenance staffs. The principal is trying to make things work. Pierce is not placing the blame at the building level for the state of the school, which is preventing teachers from being able to teach. He also mentioned the asbestos in the boiler room and elsewhere.
 - B.** Darlene Netcoh said that she heard that there have been many blackouts at Vets.
 - C.** Pierce said that the planning had not been done. The phones don't work. The elevator is dangerous. There was no evacuation plan. There are rooms designated on the second floor for the rescue of disabled students. No one knows if the fire department knows of this designation.
 - D.** Ed Ladouceur asked Pierce if teachers had received any walk-throughs or training for an evacuation process prior to the start of school.
 - E.** Pierce said there had been none. Once teachers were all in the building on the day before students entered the building, Pierce spent half of the day looking for the textbooks that had been shipped from Aldrich and Gorton. He said that there were major safety concerns in the technology rooms, because parts from where the machine shop machines had been removed were still sticking up. In the former auto shop there was still a car on a lift. There were moving boxes everywhere. In the art room there was a rat trap on top of a newspaper from 2007, and the kiln was next to students' desks. The general consensus is that the building is not safe. He said that the Chromebooks have video capabilities, and he has two students in his class that are not supposed to be photographed.
 - F.** Ladouceur said that he had heard that some parents had called OSHA or the Board of Health.
 - G.** Netcoh wondered how much money was spent on overtime to get the gyms and auditoriums ready for the first day of school.
 - H.** Pierce mentioned the scheduling issues. Since central administration is not abiding by the contract, there are many classes that have too many students and a high percentage of students with IEPs. He said that at some point down the road they are going to have to fix this problem.
 - I.** Netcoh said that at Vets students in Grades 7 and 8 are mixed together in music, tech ed., art, and literacy. She said that the problem with scheduling is that people who have never taught or have never taught in secondary schools are making decisions about matters they do not understand.

- J. Pierce said that at Vets there is one team that has eight students who have IEPs, while another team has forty-seven students with IEPs.
 - K. Netcoh said that the administration's plan has resulted in the segregation of students with IEPs.
- V. **Discussion: School Construction Update.** This topic became part of the previous agenda item.
- VI. **Discussion: Proposed Elementary Consolidation**
 - A. Karen Bachus said that there are three consolidation meetings scheduled in October and that the public needs to attend. The meetings are on October 6 at Vets, on October 13 at Pilgrim, and on October 17 at Toll Gate. The meetings all start at 6:30 pm. Bachus also said that there is a special school committee meeting scheduled for October 25 at 6:30 pm.
 - B. There was a mention about the secondary consolidation mess and that there should be no elementary consolidation at this point.
 - C. Cornell said that the director of elementary said that they want to do the consolidation all at once so they won't have to stress about it later.
 - D. Pierce said that it was the "pull the bandaid off all at once approach."
- VII. **Discussion/Action: Special Education Investigation**
 - A. Anthony Sinapi said that we are on hold with the letter. He also said that the special education advisory committee asked him to report.
 - B. Ladouceur said that the goal of our committee was accomplished because it brought the special education issue to the public.
 - C. There was a discussion about holding a public meeting.
 - D. Ladouceur said that he has gotten calls. Teachers and parents are afraid of retaliation if they speak out.
 - E. Sinapi said that the special education advisory committee wants to have a speaker come to explain the way things should be.
 - F. June Marchant explained the segregation of special education students at the elementary level. Special education students were removed from the classroom teacher's list and only put on the special education teacher's list.
 - G. There was a discussion about how to make the public aware of the meeting.
 - H. Bachus made a motion to move "Public Comment." Pierce seconded it, and the motion passed.
- VIII. **Public Comment**
 - A. One member of the public said that if the district is substantially moving IEPs to 504s, then the public should be able to get that data. He said that one could look at a pattern. He said that ultimately the special ed. team has to make the decision. His daughter was doing well with an IEP. Then she got a 504 but later had the IEP returned. He said that we probably would never know the full extent of the problem.
 - B. Ladouceur said that we need a "Ragosta Report" for special education.
 - C. The member of the public said that the school committee has both the power and the authority over the superintendent.
 - D. There were some suggestions for getting parents to go to the meeting: the Warwick Page, the Warwick Vets Page, and the Community of Warwick Page.
 - E. Another member of the public said that he knows of at least two parents who would be willing to speak at a public meeting.
- IX. **Information and Proposals from Committee Members:**
 - A. Netcoh made the motion to hold the public meeting, Bachus seconded it, and the motion passed.
 - B. Ladouceur said that he would check on October 18 or 19 as possible dates.
- X. **Next Meeting:** October 5, 2016
- XI. **Adjournment:** 8:38 pm